

# **Draft Environmental Assessment**

## **North Shore Missouri River Conservation Easement Project**



**December 2007**



***Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks***

# MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

## **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

1. **Type of proposed state action:** To hold and administer a permanent conservation easement on 5 acres of property owned by the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Foundation along the north shore of the Missouri River near Giant Springs State Park.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:**  
FWP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 MCA.

Furthermore, the Open-Space Land and Voluntary Conservation Easement Act, MCA 76-6-106, allows a means for the preservation or provision of significant open-space land.

3. **Name of project:** North Shore Missouri River Conservation Easement
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	
1420 East 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	4600 Giant Springs Road
Helena, MT 59620	Great Falls, MT 59405
406-444-3750	406-454-5840

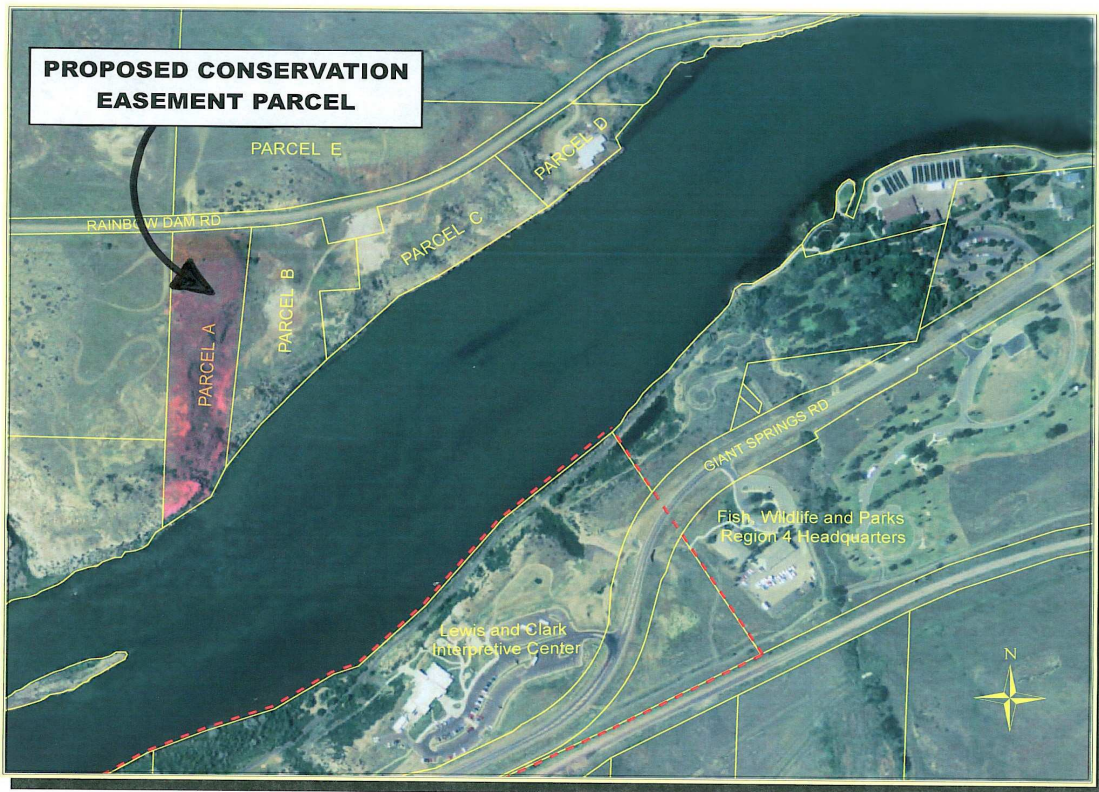
5. **Estimated Timeline of Events:**  
Public Comment Period: December 17, 2007 – January 7, 2008  
FWP Decision Notice Issued: January 14, 2008  
FWP Commission Decision: February 2008  
Montana Land Board Decision: March 2008  
Conservation Easement Documents Completed  
& Filed in Cascade County, MT: April 2008
6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):**  
Lot No. 3, located in Government Lot 3, Section 33, Township 21 North, Range 4 East, M.P.M.

The property is located in Great Falls, MT, on the north shore of the Missouri River, directly across the river from the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and slightly upstream from Giant Springs State Park. See Exhibits A & B for maps illustrating the property to be conserved.

**EXHIBIT A**  
Area Overview Map



**EXHIBIT B**  
Aerial photo illustrating proposed conservation easement shaded in red



**7. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected by the proposed action:**

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/	<u>5</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
Recreation		Forestry	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	<u>0</u>	Rangeland	<u>0</u>
Areas		Other	<u>0</u>

**8. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

**(a) Permits:**

Agency Name  
None

**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
City of Great Falls &	\$50,000
Montana Dept. of Transportation (CTEP)	

**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency/Organization Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Foundation	Land owner; approval of easement

**9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:**

The proposed action would place a conservation easement on 5 acres of property on the north shore of the Missouri River in Great Falls, MT. The property is owned by the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Foundation (Foundation). The easement would protect the property from residential and industrial development in perpetuity while retaining the visual, conservation, and recreational values associated with the historic Missouri River corridor in the Great Falls area.



The subject property is adjacent to the Lewis & Clark Heritage Greenway, which extends over 14 miles of Missouri River frontage in and adjacent to the City of Great Falls, Montana. The Greenway has been assembled over many years and now includes Giant Springs State Park, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 4 Headquarters, Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center, Sacagawea (Sulphur) Spring, the Lewis and Clark Heritage Greenway Conservation Easement, and some 15 miles of public trail system along the Missouri River owned and/or managed by FWP. Only a few vital gaps remain to be filled in this highly regarded public trail system known as the River's Edge Trail and the subject property encompasses one of those gaps.

The community of Great Falls, tourists, outdoor recreationists, and wildlife would feel the benefits of the proposed conservation easement. The property is part of an important historic viewshed from the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, River's Edge Trail, and Giant Springs State Park and other important resources and attractions on the north shore of the Missouri River.

Recreational opportunities would be enhanced as the proposed north shore extension of the River's Edge Trail is planned across this property. The River's Edge Trail is a very popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts and is considered a valuable community asset. Additionally, the easement will provide habitat conservation for game and non-game species using the property on a permanent and transitory basis.

Under the proposed conservation easement the Foundation would retain ownership of the property, the right to regulate public use of the land, the right to fence, gate and post the land with signs and boundary monuments, and the right to engage in habitat, species, or public use enhancement or restoration activities that further the goals of maintaining or improving the Conservation values of the easement. Public access would be allowed and appropriate recreational facilities may be provided in the future.

Overall, the Foundation wishes to conserve the open space, conservation and recreational values of the land. In that light, the proposed conservation easement prohibits any subdivision of the land for any purpose; cultivation or farming; exploration or development for extraction of minerals, coal, hydrocarbons, soils or other materials by any surface mining method; dumping or disposal of wastes; use of recreational motorized vehicles; and any commercial or industrial use.

The easement would be purchased from the Foundation with Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds administered by the City of Great Falls. The purchase price of the easement would be determined by an appraisal of the encumbered property. Presented with the opportunity of a conservation easement on this property, FWP believes the proposed project is a

worthy endeavor for all parties directly involved, the public, and the overall conservation and recreational values in the Missouri River corridor.



Subject property viewed across the river from Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center

**10. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

**Alternative A: Holding and administering a purchased conservation easement from the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Foundation**

A conservation easement on this property will enhance open space and viewshed values and ensure public access to natural areas for hiking, biking, and walking along the Missouri River. The enhanced public access to the north shore area will ensure it remains a point of interest for out-of-state visitors and Montana residents in perpetuity.

With this alternative, the Department would not incur costs associated with the acquisition of the easement, as that purchase would be completed with Community Transportation Enhancement Program funds administered by the Montana Department of Transportation through the City of Great Falls, MT. Additionally, FWP would not incur any obligations for maintenance of the property, as it would remain in private ownership. At a future date it's possible that the property could be donated to the Department.

**Alternative B: Declining to hold administer a conservation easement from the Lewis & Clark Interpretive center Foundation**

If FWP declines the opportunity to secure a conservation easement on the 5-acre property, the land would remain in private ownership and the viewshed, open space and conservation values of the land may be jeopardized from future subdivision or other forms of development.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST**

### **3. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.**

#### **A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 1d. As part of the conservation easement document, a Baseline Report will be completed, reviewed by FWP and the Foundation and acknowledged by them to be an accurate representation of the physical and biological condition of the property and its physical improvements as of the date of conveyance.



2. <u>AIR</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. Will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

3. <b><u>WATER</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				3b
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. Will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
m. Will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				
n. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

3b. See response to 1d.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		X	4e
f. Will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:						

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's (MNHP) species of concern database identified two nonvascular plants of significance, *Entosthodon reubiginosus* and *Funaria americana*, occurring in the region. These plants are noted in the database as being possible extinct, however there has not been a recent survey of the area (communication with Scott Mincemoyer, MNHP botanist). The proposed easement will not impact either plant if they exist within the property's boundaries.

As part of the conservation easement document, a Baseline Report will be completed, reviewed by FWP and the Foundation, and acknowledged by them to be an accurate representation of the physical and biological condition of the property and its physical improvements as of the date of conveyance.

- 4e. Since there are already noxious weeds established along the Rainbow Dam Road right-of-way next to the proposed easement area, future ground disturbances are likely to increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming further established in the area. Mitigating actions by the Foundation will include weed spraying, biological control, or mechanical removal as per the proposed conservation easement agreement between FWP and the Foundation. This conservation easement, and anticipated fencing and property boundary identification, will likely reduce illegal motorized access onto the land within the conservation easement and reduce incidence of weed introduction.

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				5g
h. Will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				5h
i. Will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

5a/b. Long-term wildlife impacts should be positive due to the prevention of fragmentation of this property from adjacent habitat for both game and non-game species (per Graham Taylor, R4 Wildlife Manager).

5f/h. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's (MNHP) species of concern database identified seven species of birds as species of concern in the area of the conservation easement. The species identified included: Chestnut-collared Longspur, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Bunting, Long-billed Curlew, McCown's Longspur, Sprague's Pipit, and Swainson's Hawk. All these species are listed 'at risk' because of limited numbers, range, and/or habitat. A search of the MNHP Point Observation Database found that none of the birds of concern noted have been seen within the proposed conservation easement area.

Bald eagles are frequently seen year round in the Missouri river corridor, but the conservation easement will have no impact on their activities.

5g. FWP plans to designate the proposed easement property as an area for non-hunting related activities, which is how it has been historically used. However as part of the agreement between the Foundation and FWP, public hunting could be allowed on the easement only if both parties agree it would be beneficial for wildlife management activities.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		X	8a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?			X			
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X		X	8d
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 8a/d. Chemical spraying will potentially be done to limit the infestation of noxious weeds on the conserved property. Only a trained licensed professional would conduct weed treatment and storage and mixing of the chemicals would be in accordance with standard operating procedures.



9. <b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?			X			9a
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 9a. The easement is designed to preclude residential and industrial development while providing for recreational access to the property. PPL Montana, one of the major neighboring property owners is aware of and very supportive of the proposed permanent conservation easement, as they have placed a conservation easement on 2,415 acres of their property to the north and east (Lewis & Clark Heritage Greenway Conservation Easement).

By sound land use management and zoning within the community, a positive impact will occur because of the additional access to open space and public recreational opportunities.

10. <b><u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				10b
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				10c
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources		X				10e
f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X			10f
g. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 10b. No changes will occur to the local or state tax base because there will be no change in the effected land's classification per state statute MCA 76.6.208.
- 10c. The proposed conservation easement will result in no change to existing utility power lines. See 7a narrative.
- 10e. The City of Great Falls, MT has agreed to purchase this conservation easement using available Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds.
- 10f. The Foundation will retain responsibility for maintenance of the property. Anticipated costs might include partial fencing of property, erection of property markers along its boundary, and weed control.

11. <b><u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				11a
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)		X				11c
d. Will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 11a. The proposed conservation easement will maintain the aesthetic beauty of the open space and historic viewshed along the Missouri River. Views to the north from the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and Giant Springs State Park will be protected.

The subject property includes the site of proposed future expansion of the River's Edge Trail on the north shore of the Missouri River. Trail expansion would enhance overall recreational opportunities on the Missouri River corridor.

As part of the conservation easement document, a Baseline Report will be completed, reviewed by FWP and the Foundation and acknowledged by them to be an accurate representation of the physical and biological condition of the property and its physical improvements as of the date of easement conveyance.

- 11c. Public access and recreational opportunities in the area will be enhanced if the proposed conservation easement is approved. Recreational use of OHV's, recreational shooting or discharge of weapons, and sport hunting would not be permitted on the property. The property may be used for public educational or interpretive programs.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. Will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				12d.
e. Other:						

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

12d. Conservation easements are not subject to SHPO consultation of compliance.

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)			X			13a
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. Is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
g. List any federal or state permits required.		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 13a. Although minor effects to a few resources have been identified, those noted can be mitigated or are of a positive impact or have been identified as a stipulation of the proposed conservation easement between FWP and the Foundation. The long-term protection of the land is the overriding motivation for the proposed easement that will provide long-term benefits for both the public and wildlife

**2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

The proposed conservation easement between FWP and the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Foundation will include terms, conditions, and restrictions governing the appropriate use and protection of the property in perpetuity. A deed of Conservation Easement would be filed in Cascade County, MT.

**PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

Alternative A (proposed action) will have no negative cumulative effects on the physical and human environments. When considered over the long-term, this action poses significant positive effects for the preservation of open space, protection of a scenic and historic viewshed, and the public's continuing access to recreational opportunities. The Project Qualification Checklist (House Bill 495) was reviewed but was not applicable for this project since construction or development actions are not proposed in this alternative.

Alternative B does not provide the property conservation protection or ensure public access to the property in perpetuity.

**PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record* and *Great Falls Tribune*;
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to interested parties and neighboring property owners to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project. Copies will be available for public review at FWP Region 4 Headquarters.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts.



**2. Duration of comment period, if any.**

Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., January 11, 2008 and can be mailed to the address below:

North Shore Conservation Easement Project  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Region 4 Headquarters  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls, MT 59405

Or email comments to: [rsemmler@mt.gov](mailto:rsemmler@mt.gov)

**PART V. EA PREPARATION**

**1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

Based upon the above assessment, which has identified a very limited number of minor impacts from the proposed action, an EIS is not required and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of review.

**2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Roger Semler  
Regional Parks Manager  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
406-454-5858

Matt Marcinek  
Giant Springs State Park Manager  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
406-454-5858

Rebecca Cooper  
MEPA Coordinator  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
1420 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Helena MT 59601  
406-444-4756

**3. List of agencies and organizations consulted during preparation of the EA:**

City of Great Falls, MT  
Lewis & Clark National Forest  
American Public Land Exchange representing PPL Montana  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Parks Division

Wildlife Division

Legal Bureau

Lands Bureau

Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System  
(NRIS)

Recreational Trails, Inc., Great Falls, MT